FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

Volume 48, Number 4 August 1997

The mission of Fellowship in Prayer is to encourage and support a spiritual orientation to life, to promote the practice of prayer, meditation, and service to others, and to help bring about a deeper spirit of unity among humankind.

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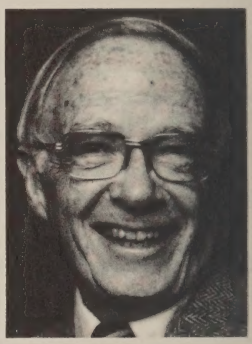
Cover photo by Tom Dunham



Be prepared for something new! Your next (October) issue of this journal will greet you with a new title: *Sacred Journey: The Journal of Fellowship in Prayer.* Why have we expanded the title to include the words *Sacred Journey?*

To begin with, we think *Sacred Journey* more fully describes the contents of the journal and the sense of our mission statement: "...to encourage and support a spiritual orientation to life, to promote the practice of prayer, meditation, and service to others, and to help bring about a deeper spirit of unity among humankind."

In addition, because we *are* all spiritual beings having a human experience, and because we *are* all on a sacred journey to the source of love, compassion, and wisdom at the heart of our being, we felt that *Sacred Journey* would have more immediate appeal to people who were being introduced to us for the first time.

As you know, we asked our readers and visitors to our website to tell us which, of a number of suggested titles, they preferred. The majority voted for *Sacred Journey.*

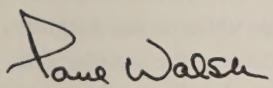
Perhaps a good way to express the reasons for that choice is to quote from a letter we received from Anidelle Flint, a subscriber from Fresno, California. She writes, "...My religious life is continuously enriched by the teachings and sacred writings of all the world's religions and philosophies. For this reason, interfaith/interreligious work and experience is of enormous importance to my own spiritual pilgrimage through life: I find I am blessed by receiving in far greater measure than I seem to give!

"I would choose, therefore, the title *Sacred Journey* followed by the subtitle*: The Journal of Fellowship in Prayer.* That title conveys to me an acceptance of the teachings and beliefs of all faiths and an acknowledgment that individuals may find understanding and sustenance along any of many spiritual paths. The title also conveys the under-

standing that people reading the journal probably do so as a part of a deep and serious quest--a journey--toward a life that acknowledges their own and others' spirituality, however it may be expressed in individual faith communities."

Other readers preferred staying with the title *Fellowship in Prayer*. They were used to it, and they liked the feeling it suggests of a community of people sharing their experiences, interests and prayers together. It does indeed do that, and has been doing it for close to fifty years! That's why it remains as the second half of the title: *Sacred Journey: The Journal of Fellowship in Prayer.*

Virtually all respondents, however they voted, agreed with Walt Fisher, who wrote, "Whether the name changes or not, the real importance of your publication is the content. That's what adds meaning to our lives and why we subscribe." We hope you agree and we look forward to your continuing companionship on the sacred journey we all share. □



Paul Walsh

In December of 1949, missionary and educator, Carl E. Evans and four others --"a mid-west businessman, a New York bank officer, a Roman Catholic financial advisor, a lady philanthropist, and a Chinese philosopher" placed a full-page ad in the *New York Times* declaring that "Prayer is the Answer." The horrific aftermath of the first atomic bombs left many acutely anxious about the world's future. People from across the country responded to the ad and passed on the names of others who shared their global concern. Mimeographed reports and eventually a pocket-sized publication were sent out from a small, airless office on East 22nd Street in New York City to encourage small circles of praying, peace-loving people from various faith traditions. This is how Fellowship in Prayer began.

Today, from our offices in Princeton, we await the dawn of a new era in the life of our publication. We recognize that today's anxieties focus less on nuclear destruction and more on the environmental health of our planet, on the tragic interpersonal and ethnic violence that plagues us, and on how to keep body and soul together in the accelerated information age. There is good news too. Many people who would never claim to be religious have embraced the spiritual search. Culture-wide we see evidence of a renewed awareness that there is "something more" to life than looking out for number one and making money.

We, too, are changing with the times. Our next issue will arrive in your mailbox sporting a new look inside and out. (Trust me, it is lovely.) In our ongoing quest to encourage prayer, meditation, and service to others as core practices of the spiritual life we are adding a few new features to our well-loved contents. Each future issue will include a sampling of the following types of articles.

Personal Interviews--We will continue to ask religious leaders and seekers of various traditions to share from their own sacred journeys and gathered wisdom. This month, The Very Reverend James Parks Morton tells of his calling to interfaith work.

A Transforming Experience--Has a single event, a fleeting moment, offered lasting transformation or insight? In our most requested feature, people retell their life-changing experiences. In this issue a cassette tape brings a much-longed for gift from God to Sonja McGee.

The Ways of Prayer--Prayer practices are as richly varied as the people offering them. In these pages psychologist Gerald May tells us of learning to pray about money.

Pilgrimage--Taking a journey to enrich one's faith has been a spiritual practice from time immemorial. You'll enjoy reading Jewel Dhuru's story of stopping at an ancient Egyptian well where she senses a connectedness that transcends time and space.

Spirituality and Aging--The later decades of life can be a spiritual treasure trove. When the stresses of an extended family weigh heavily on Vyvienne Morrison, she learns to trust the Holy Spirit, who, it turns out, has a divine sense of humor.

Spirituality and Service--Serving others impacts the spiritual lives of those who give and receive. Music therapist Charles Gourgey finds that music can reach the very ill even when they are unresponsive to other types of communication.

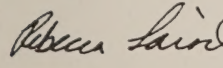
New Poetry. Mary Ryan Boyd reminds us that "God is meandering" even in those suffering with Alzheimer's. And as always, we offer *Prayers* and *Illuminations* for you to recite and ruminate upon in your quiet moments.

But the spiritual life doesn't fit into nice, tidy categories. We will continue to share assorted, wise articles like John L. Barber's search to remember his core identity after a job loss.

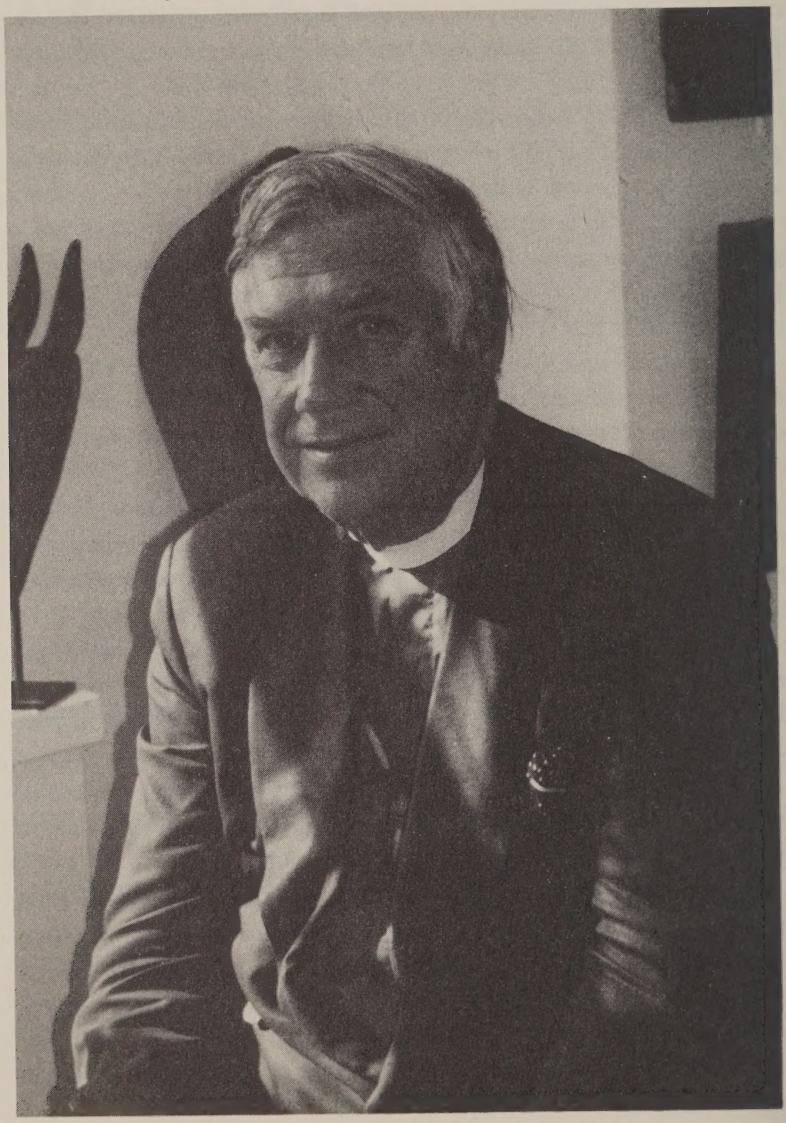
In upcoming issues we'll also highlight articles under the headings *Spirituality in Everyday Life*, *Spirituality and the Family,* and *Spiritual Community*.

Just as Carl Evans sounded the call to people of faith half a century ago, I offer a plea of my own. Come along for the journey. For all of our sakes, write down your lessons learned and insights gained. Then send them to me. The journey will be richer with you.

Blessings,



The Very Reverend Doctor James Parks Morton



Sharing Treasures:

An Interview with James Parks Morton

Late afternoon, one sunny Friday, I sat down with The Very Reverend James Parks Morton in his new office on Manhattan's East Side. For twenty-five years Morton served as Dean of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, a place where innovation in worship flourished under his leadership. These days, he gives his considerable energies to the Interfaith Center of New York, which he serves as President.

While you were still at the Cathedral, you wrote an article for *Fellowship in Prayer* in 1992 and spoke of interfaith work as a calling, your vocation. What brought you to this work?

My work has been involved with interfaith issues, really, going back to when I came to the Cathedral in 1972. My first year there I came in contact with some very interesting leaders from traditions very different than mine. I met both Hindu and Muslim leaders right away. I became very interested in a meditation group, and eventually we had Sufi dancing at the Cathedral, which was really extraordinary.

Then in 1975 I was approached by the Temple of Understanding to see if they could celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the United Nations at the Cathedral. They invited Mother Teresa and the Dalai Lama, and I began meeting a large number of leaders from other religious traditions. In 1984 I became the President of the Temple of Understanding, and so in a way, from that moment on, working with other religious traditions has been a staple part of my diet. In 1985 Ambassador Andrew Biddle Duke, from the United Nations, asked me to meet with some other leaders who were concerned that there was no structural way for governmental leaders to work together with religious leaders on important issues. So, we created a new institution called The Global Forum of Parliamentary and Spiritual Leaders. We had our first

world conference in Oxford in 1988. Important senators and congresspeople, and two hundred religous leaders came from around the world. The most surprising group came form the Soviet Union. Gorbachev sent the Russian Orthodox Archbishop, the leading Muslim leader from Ubekistan, and one of the female cosmonauts and nine others. At the end a call from Moscow came asking if we could have the same conference in Moscow. So in 1990 we had a conference in Moscow with twelve hundred in attendance. Religious leaders from all the different religions, including forty-five indigenous religious leaders from all walks--from Africa, Australia, South America, Canada, North America, and the Soviet Union came together. Since then we've had conferences in Kyoto, Rio de Janeiro, and the one in 1994 created the International Green Cross--to deal with environmental issues the way the Red Cross does human tragedies. So, this is simply to say that my involvement in interfaith work has just escalated over the years. I've always been an Anglican. I am Christian, so it's not that I'm jumping out of something to become something else. What seems so important is the understanding of the interfaith experience as one of becoming richer, deeper, more full of insight, more full of compassion, by understanding how different traditions are really walking to the same goal as you are, but on a different path with different symbols and stories.

What will be the central focus of the Interfaith Center of New York?

In these last years I've seen the escalation of interfaith conflict and inter-ethnic conflict around the world. Most conflicts have a religious root or basis. Therefore, we need to teach interfaith understanding and compassion at the level of the children, first of all. To get this message to the grassroots, to people's experience, would be as important as anything I could possibly do. That's what lead us to create the Interfaith Center of New York, as a very concrete organization in a place, in one city. We are not trying to work on the whole world, but to get to know the religious traditions and religious leadership here in New York and work together in a way that is mutually helpful. One of the things we are hoping to do is to work on a curriculum, that makes the stories that come

out of Hinduism, Native American traditions, the Bible, and other religions a part of children's education. If we can teach children the beautiful things, which are experiential and often very aesthetic, in the form of stories, art, music, and dance; if these things become a part of their lives and part of their vocabularies, just like they learn geography in the third grade, then the earth becomes home. The religious experience becomes home for people.

You are known as an innovator. Even when I lived on the West Coast I recall hearing about the Paul Winter Consort performing it's Earth Mass at the Cathedral and seeing pictures of live elephants swaying down the aisle on the Feast of St. Francis. How have creativity and courage been a part of your work?

What is required is a certain amount of courage in your convictions. With interfaith work, I think various traditions, really any religious tradition, can feel very possessive about the custody of the only true way. In the last few months I've seen a spate of newspaper articles and reports on the Southern Baptist Convention's decision to devote money to special programs to convert Jews. And there are articles on certain Orthodox groups in Judaism saying the Reformed and Conservative Jews are not practicing Judaism. And there are public conflicts with Protestants versus Catholics and Hindus versus Muslims. Around the world many of the conflicts before our eyes are between religious groups. This sort of absolutism says "We've got it, and you don't have it. And since we have it, that gives us the mandate to go after you in whatever way to convert you, to kill you, to do whatever is necessary for you to get the message." This is a very serious matter. One of the hardest things to be able to say is to say, "I am a Jew or a Christian, but I really want to be in association with you, and deeper than that, I want to be in a spiritual communion with you. I really want to share these treasures I have with you, and I want you to share your treasures with me." That is what interfaith understanding is about ultimately.

Do you sense that people have a desire for this type of interfaith communion or is it a desire that comes with cultivation?

Fear has to be removed. My experience is that people desire it deeply in the same way that they deeply desire friendship and to experience life in a variety of ways. To use an analogy like language, you don't really lose your identity if you learn to speak Spanish or Swahili or Japanese. You don't cease being yourself. Or take something like food. Eating is very intimate, you take something into your body. Yet if you start eating Italian food you don't become Italian, or if you eat French food, don't become French. The world is simply more interesting, and you understand more, and you have a richer life. I think the same is true religiously. I have spent a lot of time in Japan. I have become very close to Shinto and Buddhist communities in Japan, and I haven't ceased being a Christian. I just have become more open to seeing God in places I never thought I would see God.

Spirituality is a part of the current dialogue in the mainstream media. Is all the talk about spirituality helpful to the interfaith dialogue?

It is really helpful because spirituality knows no tradition. I mean, you have spirituality--the ways of being in the spirit, cultivating the spirit, spiritual disciplines, and spiritual experience--as a Jew, as a Christian, as a Muslim, as a native person, or as a Shinto. All of the various traditions have these things in common. Doctrine, dogma--that whole head business--is really what keeps people apart. Whereas the experience of the spirit, of the Holy Spirit, whatever word you want to use--the *Ruach*, the breath of God, is something that by definition, unites. I'm thrilled that spirituality is "in." Anything that is popular runs the risk of becoming banal, but I think that is a risk worth running. People mature, but the beginning is to have the experience. Then you use your head.

I know you have a personal passion for the arts. What would you offer as suggestions to our readers as avenues to the spirit?

I would recommend Shinto and Buddhist gardens and the tea ceremony in Japan. I mean, that's almost a communion form. It is very spiritual, although, not in a narrow sense, religious; it is marvelous. Native American dancing is very spiritual, and it binds people into a community as does Sufi dancing in the mystical tradition of Islam. You really have to look into the eyes of the person next to you, and that is a very profound experience. A lot of people grow up not looking people in the face and it is really a spiritual discipline to look into the eyes of another person.

I'd encourage breath work. You find that in the Christian tradition--the ascetic tradition--and in the Muslim tradition. Breathe, use your body and recognize that your breath and the spirit are really the same word. Be conscious of your breathing, Be conscious of your body, and conscious of the spirituality of your body. These are immediate things for people to experience.

The artistic traditions in music are so amazing. Drumming has become very important for me. It is universal; you find it in every religion. Rhythm and music are so important for people; they are related to your heartbeat. We, as humans, are a kind of drum, thump, thump, thump. That is a religious reality.

At the end of a discouraging day, can we expect to find you at home doing a little personal drumming?

I'll do some drumming, you bet.

In our next issue, we are changing the name of our publiation to *Sacred Journey*. As one of our Board of Advisors, I'd love to know your impression.

Three cheers!

Anyone wishing additional information may contact: The Interfaith Center of New York, 570 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10022, (212) 583-7412.

Alone

Grant me the ability to be alone;
may it be my custom to go outdoors each day
among the trees and grasses,
among all growing things,
and there may I be alone,
to talk with the one
that I belong to.

Rabbi Nachman of Bratzlav

Humanity

Teach us, Lord, to accept our limitations.
It is of great advantage
that we shall know our place,
and not imagine that the whole universe
exists for us alone.

Maimonides

Yet

Lord, I am not yet willing for you to have your
way with me.
But I am willing to be made willing.

F. B. Meyer

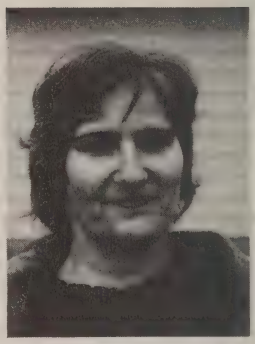
Rabbi Nachman of Bratzlav was a Polish-born Hasidic teacher. Maimonides was a twelfth century rabbi and physician. F.B. Meyer was an American Baptist preacher. All three prayers are from The Gift of Prayer: A Fellowship in Prayer book. *Available for $19.95 through bookstores or from us. Write to 291 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ 08542. Please include $3.00 for shipping and handling.*

Tom Dunham

Stepping in the Same Sand

JEWEL DHURU

On a family vacation to Egypt, this author rests where Jesus and his parents may have rested when fleeing King Herod's threats. There she senses connections that transcend time and space and unite all humankind.



The tour book of Egypt described this attraction as an olive tree and a water well where the Holy Family rested and drank when they were escaping from King Herod. It sounded fascinating! But finding it was another story. Our private guide knew it was in a suburb of Cairo called Matariah (Ma-ta-ree'-ah), although he admitted he'd never been there. So with our guide and his driver, my husband and I and our two teens started off.

After stopping to ask for directions at least three times, we finally arrived at a plain gray wall on a rather ordinary street in a residential area. It was just after midday, sunny and warm. Outside the wall, children were playing in the street, avoiding an area of standing water. The aroma of someone's lunch wafted over to us on the afternoon air. Entering through a gap in the wall, a small, unassuming shrine was revealed.

The olive tree turned out to be just a gnarled stump, which I suppose wasn't really surprising since it began bearing fruit about two thousand years ago. Beside it was a much younger olive tree. This

Jewel Dhuru is Canadian by birth, raised as a Christian and married to a Hindu from India. She holds degrees in Ancient and Medieval History, Intercultural Communication and Counseling, and teaches English as a second language to international students.

possible descendant of the stump reminded me of birth, vitality, dormancy, and eventual rebirth, the usual process of life. Near the two trees were sand, a wall with shrine-like objects on it, and a bench. There were no other tourists there, only a local resident ready to light a candle for us near a picture of the Holy Family, for a small donation. Less than thirty feet farther down a sand path the well was no more than a hole in the ground, some twenty-five feet deep and ten feet in diameter. At the bottom, we could see a shallow pool of clear water.

This was the whole site, and yet somehow it was more than enough. Despite its lack of popularity, I had no doubt that it was genuine. Just the fact that it was in such a populated area but yet seemed to be little known by tourists suggested its authenticity. To the neighbors, there was nothing extraordinary about it; it was just a part of their everyday lives. This spot was not for the masses; it bore simple truths that were self-evident but only recognized by a few.

If one sits by a river long enough, eventually the same droplet of water will come by again, after being changed into water vapor in a cloud, or a snowflake over some distant mountain, and after it takes the scenic route of transformation.

As I stood there waiting for my picture to be taken with our tour guide and driver, the profound impact of this visit hit me. I recalled hearing somewhere that if one sits by a river long enough, eventually the same droplet of water will come by again, after being changed into water vapor in a cloud, into a snowflake over some distant mountain, and after it takes the scenic route of transformation. I recalled the words of Chief Seattle of the Duwamish-Suquamish tribes who said we all breathe the same air--the tree, the insect, the dying man, and the newborn.

Jewel Dhuru and the stump of the olive tree.

For a moment, so many ideas went rapidly through my mind. It occurred to me that the grains of sand that touched my shoes at this moment could conceivably have touched the sandals of Mary or Joseph. They might also have touched the feet of ruffians and all other manner of life. Individuals with a variety of intents, thoughts, and backgrounds must have passed this way. The drama that could have been played out around this setting of a well in a desert could be endless.

But it really didn't matter who had been there before and who would come after. I felt so connected, through time and space, to all of humanity and all that comprised the universe. My experience gave new meaning to the words 'friend' and 'family,' and indeed, even to the word 'enemy.' I will never forget the feeling or that moment and I carry them with me through my connections with others every day, with every raindrop and breath and every grain of sand. □

Voice From the Grave

SONJA MCGEE

For years the wrenching desire of this young woman's heart was to once again hear her mother's voice. Only a gift from God could give her what she most wanted.

The doctors had just diagnosed my mother with pulmonary hypertension (high blood pressure), when, at the age of twenty-four, she went into cardiac arrest and died. Disregarding her symptoms as flu-like, she and her doctors did not have today's medical advantages to detect her illness early. I was five years old when I attended her funeral.

I remember it vividly, for it haunted me for years. Forced to grow up beyond my years, I knew what was going on. I knew my mother was dead, in Heaven, and never coming back. But why? Why my mommy? Had I been a bad kid and was I now being punished by God? I could not understand why! All my friends had their moms, yet I stood alone without one. Why me?

The laws at that time allowed me to receive my mother's monthly social security checks. The trustees of my 'estate' invested portions of my money. At the age of twenty-one I was to gain control over my inheritance. Yet I never wanted the money.

The loss of my mother could not be replaced by a check. Still, many times my family would tell me how grateful I should be to have

Sonja McGee is a freelance writer from east Texas. She has several published works and is co-owner of Faye's Studio.

at least gotten some money out of the situation. It was not that bluntly put, but that was the message. I wanted my mother, not the money. Time after time I would hold back the tears, trying to explain to someone that I would sacrifice all my money if I could just hear my mother's voice again. I would give it all up to hear her say "I love you" once more. The money accumulated while her voice rang silent in my ears.

I remember one time, I had earned sixteen dollars babysitting. One of my aunts had come to visit, and we went shopping at the local mall. Being fifteen, my tastes were different than that of my thirty-something aunt. I found seven dollars worth of cheap jewelry that I wanted. Although tacky, it was the 'in' thing, the 'cool' stuff everybody had. My aunt threw a fit. "I can't believe you are going to waste your money on junk. There are kids out there that can't even afford to eat, and here you are throwing your money away. You should feel grateful to be able to buy such things for yourself." This coming from a woman who, in her hands, was holding two hundred dollars worth of new merchandise. None of which she needed.

I would sacrifice
all my money
if I could just hear
my mother's
voice again.
I would give it all up
to hear her say
"I love you"
once more.

Money was always an issue that invaded my life. The money often left me feeling cheated. My inheritance only aggravated and enraged those around me and became the topic of most holiday and family discussions. I had never gotten used to the idea of having an inheritance as opposed to a mother. My family chose not to talk about my mother and the person she was before she died. Yet my family had no hesitation in talking about money, and up until I was twenty-one I was continuously reminded of the privilege I had been given by having 'all of this money.'

When I turned twenty-one, the money was finally mine. No longer would I have to hear others' opinions on how my money should be spent. I was in control of its losses or gains. I would decide if the money would be the next dinner conversation or not. When I did gain the power of ownership, my relationship with my family was severed due to hard feelings on all sides. Along with receiving the money, I fell in love for the first time. A year and a half later, all the money was gone. I was broke, had no family, no friends, and a repossessed, eighteen thousand dollar car on my credit record.

Instead of hating the money, maybe I should have been somewhat grateful. Maybe my family was right. When my mother died I guess it could have been worse, I could have been left an orphan, or shuffled among foster homes, with no foreseeable future. The money allowed me a future, considering the lack of my past. Maybe I did get paid off, but was that truly a bad thing? Maybe it was God's way of making sure

Brooks Walsh

I was taken care of. The absolute guilt I felt at having squandered such a large inheritance that I had gained by the painful and unfortunate death of my dear mother flooded my thoughts day and night. Slowly I was killing what little spirit was left in me.

Not only had I alienated myself from my friends and family, but God was a definite last on my list. While involved in my first love relationship, I attended church only once, and often forgot to pray. My faith finally hit rock bottom. One night, after drinking heavily, I lost a crucifix that I had received when I was sixteen years old, and confirmed in the Catholic church. That night I changed my life accordingly. Penniless, brokenhearted, and full of regrets, over several years I slowly got my life back in order.

I spotted a green colored cassette tape. On the side it read: Sonja's Second Birthday. My heart stopped and for a moment I forgot how to breathe.

A year ago my grandfather passed away and once again I was given another small inheritance. Learning my lesson, it now gathers interest. I have forgiven myself my past mistakes, and my relationships have been strengthened. I have been going to church for some time now, and daily I pray and read a scripture from the Bible.

After my grandpa's death, the family divided his property. Everyone chose what they wanted. I packed some sentimental things in a box that was put into storage for me. Four months ago, I retrieved the box. I decided to look through it when I got home. Almost on the bottom, I spotted a green-colored cassette tape. On the side it read: Sonja's Second Birthday. My heart stopped, and for a moment I forgot how to breathe.

Could it be that after all these years of silence I would again hear my mother's voice? In total disbelief I began playing the tape. The first thing I heard was the loud shrill of a toddler...it was me! A tear rolled down my cheek, as I heard my mother's voice talking to me, calling me by name. Recorded forever on a tape long ago, she spoke to me for roughly thirty minutes.

That half an hour answered so many questions, filled so many voids. Yet something was not right about this. For all those years I had asked about my mother, I had said I would give anything, including the money, to hear her voice. And yet my family remained silent. An anger rose from my depths. How could such an important piece of my life be casually tossed into a box, left in a damp and smelly cubicle? I had not seen this tape when going through my grandpa's belongings.

Half of me knew I should be more than thankful to God above for granting me this gift. The other half began feeding on resentment towards my family for not telling me sooner. For two weeks I prayed, trying to make sense of the question: Why now? Suddenly I knew the answer. Losing my mother and money, and gaining it back, then hearing her voice, having the ability to listen to her more than once was a true gift from God. I do not know why or how, nor do I ask. In God's time God answered the prayers and wishes of a little girl, and relinquished the hate and regrets of a teenager in need. I've not said anything to my family about this tape and don't know if I ever will. I thank God for my gift, and can now thank the family member who put it in my box. □

The Alphabet of Spiritual Literacy

FREDERIC AND MARY ANN BRUSSAT

Most of us started reading lessons by learning the alphabet. Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat have borrowed that bit of pedagogy and created an Alphabet of Spiritual Literacy, a collage of wisdom from the world's religions and from spiritual teachers of all eras.

A

ATTENTION

Pay attention. Stay awake and totally alert. See with receptive eyes and discover a world of ceaseless wonders.

B

BEAUTY

Walk the path of beauty. Relish and encourage its inward and outward expressions. Acknowledge the radiance of the creation.

BEING PRESENT

Live in the present moment. Don't obsess about the past or worry about the future. All you need is right here now.

C

COMPASSION

Open your heart, mind, and soul to the pain and suffering in the world. Reach out to others and discover the rewards and obligations of deep feeling.

Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat direct the Values and Visions Circles, an international network of small groups. The Alphabet of Spiritual Literacy is from pages 19-25 of Spiritual Literacy: Reading the Sacred in Everyday Life, *copyright 1996 by Mary Ann and Frederic Brussat. Reprinted by permission of Simon & Schuster.*

CONNECTIONS

Cultivate the art of making connections. See how your life is intimately related to all life on the planet.

D

DEVOTION

Express your feelings of praise and adoration through devotional practices. Pray with words and pray through your actions.

E

ENTHUSIASM

Celebrate life with this intoxicating passion. It adds zest to everything and helps build community. Hold nothing back.

F

FAITH

Recognize and accept that there is another dimension to life than what is obvious to us. Live with obstacles, doubt, and paradox, knowing that God is always present in the world.

FORGIVENESS

In both your private and public lives, discover the sweet release that comes from forgiving others. Feel the healing balm of being forgiven and of forgiving yourself.

G

GRACE

Accept grace and your world will be larger, deeper, richer, and fuller. Look for its intimations everywhere. Let this seed of the Giver of Life bloom in your words and deeds.

GRATITUDE

Spell out your days with a grammar of gratitude. Be thankful for all the blessings in your life.

H

HOPE

Let this positive and potent emotion fuel your dreams and support your service of others. Through your attitudes and actions, encourage others never to lose hope.

HOSPITALITY

Practice hospitality in a world where too often strangers are feared, enemies are hated, and the "other" is shunned. Welcome guests and alien ideas with graciousness.

I

IMAGINATION

Give imagination free rein in your life. Explore its images and ponder its meaning-making moments, and it will always present you with something new to be seen, felt, or made known.

J

JOY

Rejoice and be exceedingly glad. Find this divine energy in your daily life and share it with others.

JUSTICE

Seek liberty and justice for all. Work for a free and fair world where oppression and inequality no longer exist.

K

KINDNESS

Let Spirit flow through you in little acts of kindness, brief words of encouragement, and manifold expressions of courtesy. These deeds will add to the planet's fund of good will.

L

LISTENING

Cultivate the art of deep listening in which you lean toward the world in love. All things in the universe want to be heard, as do the many voices inside us.

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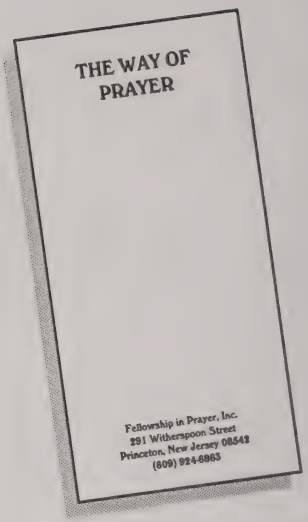


* * * * * * *

What would you like to tell us about your spiritual needs, desires, experiences? About *Fellowship in Prayer*? Use the space below!

LOVE

Fall in love over and over again every day. Love your family, your neighbors, your enemies, and yourself. And don't stop with humans. Love animals, plants, stones, even the galaxies.

M

MEANING

Constantly try to discover the significance of your experiences. Seek further understandings from sacred texts and spiritual teachers.

N

NURTURING

Take good care of the best that is within you. Self-exploration and personal growth continue throughout our lifetimes and equip us to tend to the needs of others.

O

OPENNESS

Hold an open house in your heart for all people and all things. Practice empathy with others and receptiveness towards the universe.

P

PEACE

Protect the earth's future by promoting peace everyday. Your small steps will link you with others who are combating violence in the world.

PLAY

Be playful. Express your creative spirit in spontaneity. Hurrah the pleasures of being, and let loose your laughter.

Q

QUESTING

Savor questions and thrill to the quest. See your life as a journey that quickens your faith and deepens your soul.

R

REVERENCE

Practice reverence for life. The sacred is in, with, and under all the things of the world. Respond with appropriate respect and awe.

S

SHADOW

Give up trying to hide, deny, or escape from your imperfections. Listen to what your demons have to say to you.

SILENCE

Slow down. Be calm. Find a place where you can regularly practice silence. There you will find the resources to revitalize your body, mind, and soul.

T

TEACHERS

Be willing to learn from the spiritual teachers all around you, however unlikely or unlike you they may be. Always be a sensitive student.

TRANSFORMATION

Welcome the positive changes that are taking place in your life. Open up the windows and let in some fresh air. Wholeness and healing are waiting in the wings.

U

UNITY

In this age of global spirituality, respect differences but affirm commonalities. Work together with those who are trying to make the world a better place.

V

VISION

Practice the art of seeing the invisible. Use the wisdom of your personal visions to renew yourself and your community.

W

WONDER

Cultivate a vibrant curiosity and welcome the reports of your senses. The world is alive and moving toward you with rare epiphanies and wonderful surprises. Remember you are standing on holy ground.

X

THE MYSTERY

Accept the unknown as part of life. Don't try to unravel the profound mysteries of God, human nature, and the natural world. Love the ineffable.

Y

YEARNING

Follow your heart's boundless desire. It takes you out of yourself and fosters an appreciation for the multidimensional pleasures of life.

YOU

Accept that you are a child of God. Sing your own song with gusto. Fulfill your mission as a copartner with the Holy One in the unfolding drama of the universe.

Z

ZEAL

Be passionately aroused by life. Cherish every moment, honor your commitments, and treasure your kinship with all. □

Praying About Money

GERALD G. MAY

John Wesley, Methodism's founder once said of money: "Earn all you can, save all you can, and give all you can." This author also encourages us to pray all we can about money.

Although I sometimes still find it difficult to pray about money, it's much easier than it used to be. For a long time, money was one of those islands of life that almost never entered my prayer. Perhaps I would have prayed more about money if I had ever been poor and hungry, but I think not. If I were hungry, I think I would just pray for food.

There are other reasons why prayer about money was difficult. One is that money isn't quite real. It's only a means of exchange, a symbol of what economists call "purchasing power." You can hold it in your hands, but it's just coins or paper, or even plastic, and it doesn't really do anything until you spend it or give it away. You can invest money, but even then it only increases your purchasing power. Aside from the occasional dollar I hand to someone on the street, money seems almost like a concept. And I don't tend to pray about concepts.

It was at a "money and spirituality" workshop at Shalem, the Institute for Spiritual Growth where I work, years ago that I was first introduced to the idea of praying about money. The leader suggested we could pray about how much money we needed or wanted, and how much to spend, give away, or save. The message, as I hear it, was that if we

Gerald G. May is a psychiatrist, author of seven books related to spiritual and psychological development, and Director for Research and Program Development of the Shalem Institute, 5430 Grosvenor Lane, Bethesda, MD 20814. *Reprinted by permission.*

Robert F. Campbell

want our choices to be guided by God, we can pray about money in the same way we pray about vocation, relationships, health, or anything else. But I still find it difficult.

Then I realized my biggest resistance: I didn't really *want* to pray about money. To do so is to relinquish my control over money--to put my purchasing power into God's hands. It's a familiar paradox for me; I want to do what God wants me to do, but I also want to stay in control. That's why I keep discovering these prayerless islands in life where I resist opening my choices to God.

But when I move through the resistance, I find I actually *enjoy* praying about money. It's like entering an entirely different world. In my usual mind, for example, I never want to part with money, and always want more than I currently have. I don't know how much money would finally be "enough"--I only know I don't have that much, and I suspect I never will. But when I enter the mind of prayer, I almost always have the strange and energizing feeling that what I have is sufficient, even abundant. More important, I also sense that God is right at hand, endlessly willing and wanting to replace money as the source of my security.

Without prayer, I usually go from one extreme to another in making financial choices. I either obsess about the decision and try to calculate what's best, or I make the choice impulsively, almost without a thought. It's very different when I pray. When I pray, I usually feel an intuitive leading, a gut-sense of rightness or wrongness about a particular choice. I've found that if I trust that sense--even when it doesn't fit my mental judgments--things work out very well. And if I don't sense any leading, I take that as a sign to wait and just keep watching and praying.

Now I try to pray about money as I pray about other things in my life. As I say, I still sometimes find it difficult. I often have to remind myself to do it. But when I do, it is enjoyable. I can never say for sure whether my choices have been guided by God; I can only want them to be and hope they are. Praying about money is a very natural way of claiming that desire and hope. It helps me get in touch with what's truly important, and it helps me trust that I am making my decisions in the best way possible: with reverence and love. □

3-3-3

VYVIENNE MORRISON

Family problems and conflicts led this writer to begin asking God for guidance. Before long the Spirit was waking her up in the middle of the night and making her smile.

A true turning point in my life started in 1975 when I turned fifty. In reflection, I did not like myself. I needed to be in control, I was a perfectionist, extremely judgmental, a bit self-righteous and materialistic. I was a full-time career woman, married with two children and a large, demanding extended family.

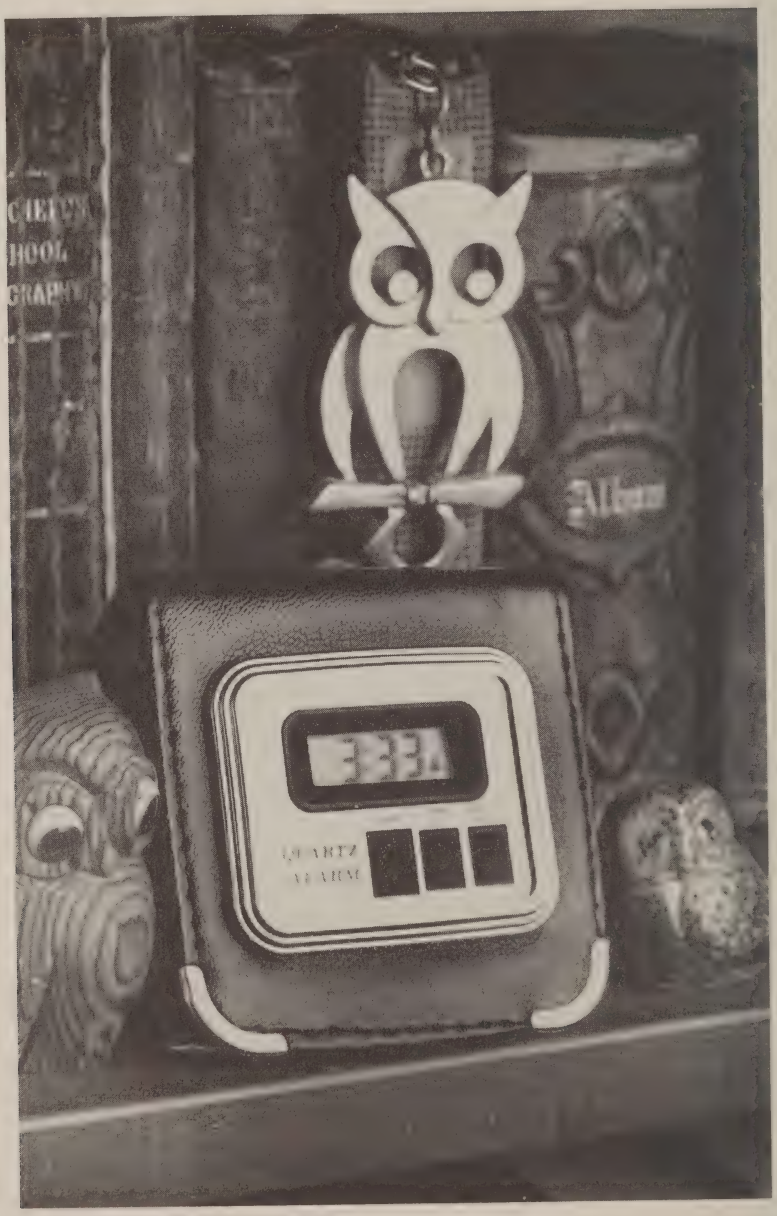
My marriage was falling apart. Our daughter had just left the university and was moving into an apartment with her boyfriend. Our son, who was still living at home while attending the university, was hiding marijuana in the family freezer. When I discovered the plastic bag, it was my first realization that he was taking drugs. I quickly flushed it down the toilet. At the same time all of this was happening, there was a multitude of problems going on with my six siblings.

How did my life get to this point? I truly felt the fault of all these problems rested with me! I finally turned to God for help.

I felt such responsibility for my immediate family, as well as my siblings. (Who, incidentally, were all married with children of their own.) I heard a still small voice within me say, "You will always be the *older* sister, but you no longer need to be the *big* sister. Remember, the telephone rings in both directions!" *Wow!* This message really changed my life as I began to feel the presence of the Holy Spirit. Releasing control and asking for guidance, the solutions to my family's problems

Vyvienne Morrison was raised on a homestead in Wyoming, was a working mother for many years and now resides in Washington State where she volunteers at a local elementary school. She has added FiP to her 3:33 a.m. prayers.

Robert F. Campbell



seemed clearer. I was finally realizing that I was not the one responsible for the choices my family was making. I provided suggestions, but that was all.

My husband wanted to move into an apartment for a trial separation. Again, with the Holy Spirit's help, I was able to say to my husband with confidence, "No, I will be the one moving to an apartment. You can keep the house and all the bills. Have you really thought this through? I believe that together, we have a past full of memories, but apart, it will all be lost." My words gave him reasons not to act in haste.

I felt a need to let my daughter know my concerns about her choice to move in with her boyfriend. I told her, "Anyone can play house, but it takes adults to make a marriage." With God's help, I realized that as painful as it would be, it was time to let go. My daughter needed to learn life's lessons on her own.

Everything I had once perceived as problems were actually worries over which I had no control.

The fourth message from the Holy Spirit concerned my son, giving me strength to say with conviction, "I will not tolerate drug use by you or any of your friends inside my home. I cannot be with you every step of the way. But here in my home, I can demand that you respect my choice to obey this country's laws." With this, there were no longer any further attempts to use drugs in my home.

As things were beginning to change in my life, God sent another messenger to me. Her name was Mary. We felt an immediate friendship. She was a teacher to me in many ways. She shared with me that God called God's people at 3:00 a.m. Laughingly, I asked if that was Pacific Coast time. She said God always listens, but this way God doesn't have everyone praying at the same time! I've always remembered that.

Believe it or not, I started waking up about 3:00 a.m. My message was, "The Holy Trinity." *The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit*--3-3-3. They were all on my side.

I can't believe how beautiful, fulfilling and peaceful my life has become. I am most grateful. My husband and I have celebrated our forty-seventh wedding anniversary and we are happier today than we have ever been. We learned long ago not to take each other for granted and realize how important shared memories are. Our daughter is a beautiful, loving wife and a mother of three children. She is extremely active in her children's schools and community service. She is a complete joy to her father and me. Our son is a wonderful husband and father of two children. He is an excellent provider with a terrific sense of humor and love. He is also a joy to us. As an afterthought, my extended family are all managing just fine without my constant intervention!

In closing, I wish to share a riddle the Holy Spirit gave me. As you will see, the Holy Spirit has a sense of humor. I had fallen asleep thinking about my loved ones with all their problems. My husband was having problems with his diabetes. My daughter was returning to work and looking for a babysitter for her newborn. The eleven o'clock news had just reported a tremendous storm approaching Dutch Harbor, where my son coincidentally was crab-fishing. My sister called in tears about her son who was having emotional and mental problems. Another sister and family were without electricity and heat, as the temperature continued to drop. I could go on forever, as there seemed to be no end.

As I awoke, I again saw 3:33 a.m., and suddenly remembered hearing, "A set of trees minus the tees." Having no clue what this meant, I called my friend Mary, who was usually very helpful in translating my dreams. Even she was stumped, as she replied, "Someday, you will find the answer." We both laughed.

The next day walking back from lunch, a spontaneous thought crossed my mind. A "set" means two, so two trees minus the "t's" would make "wo-rees." I started to laugh, since everything I had once perceived as problems actually were only worries over which I had no control. I felt an instant sense of relief.

This riddle has come to mind a million times and I always smile as think of the Holy Spirit. What a gift! □

When Words Fail

CHARLES GOURGEY

From years of experience, this author reminds us "there is never a moment, no matter how ill someone may be, that we can say with certainty that communication is impossible." When communication exists, so can the expression of love.

A woman was standing wordlessly by the bedside of her dying sister, in a room on the hospice inpatient unit. When I approached her, I saw tears in her eyes. Her sister lay in a coma, in some dark, inaccessible place. "There are just so many things I want to tell her," the woman said, almost pleading, "and now she will never hear them."

I am a music therapist in training. I have worked in hospitals and hospices, with people who are seriously ill or are dying. I especially look for patients who can no longer use words to tell me who they are or what they want. Something, perhaps a stroke, perhaps some unexplainable form of dementia, perhaps being in a coma, has robbed them of their ability to speak. I try to explore how music can become a bridge between these people and the outside world, including their loved ones.

We may have difficulty conceiving language without thinking of words. Yet I have found that these wordless people have their own language, which does not depend on words. Recognizing this kind of lang-

Charles Gourgey, Ph.D., has worked as a spiritual counselor and is currently expanding this work to music therapy. He has written numerous articles appearing in religious and spiritual journals.

Janet Gnall

uage and learning to "speak" it can keep communication alive.

Once I visited a woman rendered totally aphasiac by stroke. Her son and daughter came every day, trying to speak to her and expecting her to respond. Hearing nothing from her, they would repeat their words loudly, as if she were hard of hearing. She only receded further into her bed, her head slumping over her chest, her eyes closing protectively, creating a physical distance between herself and the words assaulting her like hard pebbles.

I began to play my wooden flute. She sat suddenly upright and smiled; her eyes opened, reflecting the sunlight streaming through the window. She stretched her arms towards me and began to dance with the upper part of her body, in perfect time to the music.

I have seen many kinds of response to music when words seem unable to get through. For such people music is more than entertainment; it is *communication*. Like words, music communicates a full range of emotion, but more directly. Nonverbal patients do respond to words, but they respond more to the "music" in the words than to their literal meaning. Words shouted or spoken harshly communi-

cate impatience, frustration, and even rejection, regardless of what the words mean. Words spoken softly, slowly, gently, express the love in the speaker's heart.

It is important to me to help family members maintain a connection to a loved one who no longer speaks to them. It is so easy to lose faith. "How can music help?" one woman asked me. "My mother is sick; she is dying. Music seems like a waste of time." But it is precisely when someone is approaching the transition we call death that music can be of most value in offering comfort and connection. My hospice colleagues tell me that dying people have two great fears: the fear of pain, and the fear of abandonment. These people need to know they are surrounded by the loving, caring presence of others.

Dying people have two great fears: the fear of pain, and the fear of abandonment.

I visited this woman's mother in the hospital. She was ninety years old, slight and frail, disoriented and demented. With soft, low tones on my flute, I played some folk melodies I thought she might remember from childhood. She took my hand in both of hers and held it hard; I was surprised by her strength and the willfulness in her movements. Then she placed my hand over her breast, right by her heart, to let me know that I had reached her. The moment seemed both intimate and sacred.

On my next visit, I was surprised to find her very agitated. Her daughter was with her, trying to give her water to drink. Her mother would take one sip through a straw, then start coughing and spitting it up. The daughter tried again, several times, with the same frustrating result. Her mother lay on the bed, writhing and moaning. Finally, the daughter allowed me to approach.

I held the mother's hand, and sang to her a folk song in her language. I stopped singing and allowed her to rest her hand in mine. She became quiet and still. Then she took my hand in both of hers and

held on hard. I waited a few moments, allowing myself to be with her quietly. Then I invited the daughter to take my place, and carefully withdrawing my hand, I placed the daughter's hand there instead, where her mother could hold her and feel her presence. I told the daughter she need do no more than just this, and it will reassure her mother greatly.

Exactly one hour later, her mother died. The head nurse told me the transition had been peaceful.

Families of people who are seriously or terminally ill experience many conflicted emotions. Fear is certainly one. Guilt is another. We want to *do* things for the sick person, make her well, or now give what we thought we should have given long before. Sometimes we try too hard, and what we communicate is not our concern but our anxiety. Much of this anxiety comes from a sense that we are losing this person, because the familiar ways of words are no longer available.

People need to know they are surrounded by the loving, caring presence of others.

I would really like family members to know that there is never a moment, no matter how ill someone may be, that we can say with certainty that communication is impossible. And when communication exists, so can the expression of love. As long as the body is alive, it still carries the soul. In fact, when the body begins to weaken, the soul often becomes more visible, since the physical energy needed to maintain fear and control is lacking. And so I have found that it is often with those who are dying that moments of intimate peace and communion are most possible--although these usually occur without words.

To me, music therapy is really spiritual caregiving, but instead of a clerical collar I carry a flute or a guitar. I want to touch the person's soul, to let him or her know that love is still possible. As a music therapist, I know there are many kinds of music: a voice's gentle sound,

a hand's light touch, the soft cadence of loving words. This music is available to all of us. I explained to the woman at her dying sister's bedside that we believe most people in comas can still hear. It is not too late: tell her what is in your heart, and on some level she will know. I left the room to the sound of the music of the visitor's words, a sound of hope, a sound without tears. □

Intimate Chat with an Alzheimer's Patient

Don't worry about the disengaged people.
Only go to see them.

You are your Mother's latch
to the shutting doors she sees on every side
and has for long seen. You are her thought,
reminding her, not always, but now and then,
of other days which either grow great in memory
or are big all by themselves. Or small.

Can you translate into words the kindred views you share?
Maybe your Mother's ramblings suit her,
recalling some time, some situation
for her to think about or end.

Her life is never nothing at all.
By only being she says something.
She is a wanderer of short moves.
God is meandering in her.
Part of a pilgrim people.

If seeing her flows as of one piece
with the praying life you share with others,
then your visit's an extension of such life.
All prisons become open, hers and yours.

If your going is a coda
from your common song with others, then
your being with her
is a primary source as well,
your visit truly a little celebration.

Mary Ryan Boyd

Mary Ryan Boyd's work has appeared in Catholic Worker *and* Bookstore Review. *She has been included in anthologies; in* Emily Dickenson: A First Book Affair (1990) *and* In the West of Ireland (1992). *The present poem grows out of the knowledge of suffering in the patient and in her or his friends. She is also an editor, chiefly of dissertations.*

Lila Durkin

Discovering, Remembering, and Seeing

JOHN L. BARBER

The loss of a job sent this writer on a vocational search that turned out to be a sacred journey toward the center of his heart.

> Deep within them I will plant my Law, writing it on their hearts. Then I will be their God and they shall be my people.

This verse from Jeremiah reminds us that believing in God is not something that is foreign or alien to us. God has placed divine law within us. When we were knit together in our mothers' wombs, God placed something divine there.

Belief in God has already been planted within us. It is as normal and natural to us as our physical bodies. It is similar to the blood in our veins or the air we breathe. We are already religious and already spiritual. Faith is not so much something to learn or be taught as it is something to discover, remember, and see.

Discovering

If God's law is deep within us then one of our tasks in life is to make an inward journey to find the law written there.

So deeply may this law be buried that it could be difficult to find. It is as if the deep law is down below the surface of an ancient river bed. Over it are layer upon layer of sediment--cultural conditioning, learning from our family of origin, and defense mechanisms which protect us from being hurt. The values of the world such as success, prestige, money, status and achievement, the expectations of others, and the voice of the devil also form deep layers which cover over the law of God.

John L. Barber is an attorney, writer, husband, and father from North Carolina.

We have to dig for this law as if we were mining for valuable ore. We reach this law in a variety of ways: by dealing with depression, through counseling and therapy, working through issues from our family of origin, and soul searching, as well as analysis of our dreams and dealing with our mistakes and failures. This is why uncovering this law can be painful.

The search is also beautiful. Beneath the layers we find God--God's love and will for us. We find who it is we really are, who it is in us that God created.

Remembering

After I lost my job as the general counsel of a North Carolina company, I became keenly interested in discerning my vocation. As a result of my search, I discovered *What Color is Your Parachute? A Practical Manual for Job-Hunters and Career-Changers*, then in its twenty-sixth annual edition. Unfamiliar with *Parachute*, I suspected that it was a very secular work. Nonetheless, I decided to buy it. To my surprise, in working through it, I found *Parachute* to be a very holy and sacred text.

In the book's appendix, the author, Richard Nelson Bolles, has written a beautiful piece on finding our mission in life. In it, he describes our spiritual journey and our life, in a romantic and poetic way that I had not thought of previously. He writes,

> (By) the very act of being born into a human body, it is inevitable that we undergo a kind of amnesia--an amnesia which typically embraces not only our nine months in the womb, our baby years, and almost one third of each day (sleeping), but more importantly any memory of our origin or our destiny. We wander on Earth as an amnesia victim. To seek after Faith, therefore, is to seek to climb back out of that amnesia. Religion or faith is the hard reclaiming of our knowledge we once knew as a certainty.

Janet Gnall

According to Bolles, before we were born, we knew who we were, whose we were, and where we were. During the period of time from conception to birth, we developed amnesia so that, upon our arrival into the world, we had lost our memory. We had forgotten that we were God's and came from Him.

Thus, as we journey through life, one of our goals is not only to discover but to remember. We struggle to recall our origin and uncover our identity.

Some of us go through life without remembering. Others think that they do remember, but suffer from illusions and lead themselves astray. The illusion may be that we are gods unto ourselves, so that we then live out of that self-interest. Some of us remember a small part of the picture; others, more. No one fully remembers.

Our life journey is an invitation to remember or relearn that we come from God and will return to God; that we are put here for some reason. All around us are clues and aides to help us remember: sermons, books, the natural world, and that voice inside us speaking from our heart.

The Bible and its stories, in essence, are aids to the memory of that which we have forgotten. In many respects, when the prodigal son came to his senses and decided to return home, he remembered who he was and where he was from. Once he remembered this, he returned home.

Church worship is an act of remembrance. For example, the service of the Holy Eucharist in my church, the Episcopal Church, is a ritual to bring us out of our amnesia. We begin the service by remembering through the reading of the Old Testament lesson and finally the Gospel. After the Gospel reading, the sermon is given as an aid to memory. The Nicene Creed is recited to formalize the recollection of belief. The ritual of remembrance is culminated in the Holy Communion for we "do this in remembrance of" Him.

God gives us occasions in life--invitations--to remember in the death of a loved one, brushes with illness, and any circumstance which leads us into soul searching. Soul searching, in essence, is trying to remember. The crises of life are opportunities to remember as are its passages and stages such as marriage, the birth of children, and mid-life.

Seeing

In addition to remembering, another metaphor for the spiritual journey is seeing--the recovery of our spiritual sight. In the New Testament, there are many stories about the healing of the blind and the recovery of sight. One such miracle story tells of Jesus healing the man born blind.

There is an actual physical healing, a demonstration of the power of God over illness and an illustration of God's compassion. In addition, there is a spiritual healing, for the man born blind gains his spiritual eyesight as well.

As we journey through life, one of our goals is not only to discover but to remember. We struggle to recall our origin and uncover our identity.

A poor man, a beggar who was blind from birth came to see, not only with his physical eyes, but his spiritual eyes. He came to believe in Jesus as the son of man and worshiped Him. His coming to sight is compared to the vision of the Pharisees, the religious elite, which remained blurred and limited.

As we journey through life one of our tasks is to develop sight--to see more and more clearly from a spiritual perspective. Traveling on our respective paths on this earth, we are invited to become more conscious. To do so we must avoid the trap that the Pharisees fell into--of believing there was nothing more to see and that an itinerant preacher from Nazareth or a blind beggar could not know more than they did.

As we are healed of our blindness, we come to see more and more of God who was there all along. He does not suddenly appear before us for the first time. As we are healed, the scales fall off our eyes and then we see God who was always there.

We already believe in God. We were born trusting in God. If we don't realize this yet, it is only because we have neither discovered, remembered, nor seen it. These are the metaphors for our spiritual tasks. Within us is our own inner authority--actually not our authority but God's.

The King James version translates the passage from Jeremiah: "I will put my law into their *inward parts* and I will write it onto *their hearts.*" Thus, as we listen to "our inward parts," that deepest part of ourselves, and as we search our souls, we find God. This is the kingdom of God within us. In our hearts, that place which is deepest within us, we know who we are and whose we are. In our center, we know what we are supposed to do with our lives. □

REMEMBER!

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